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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

OFFICE OF DEFENSE  
TS-00184/AP-C1

17 AUG 1965

should be  
continued  
assessment

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Effects of Air Strikes Against North Vietnam [as of  
31 July 1965 (C)]

1. (S/LD/NFD) North Vietnamese Public and Political Reaction:

[During July, statements by DRV leaders and articles in their official press indicate that the government of North Vietnam will persevere despite continued US/GVN air strikes. The DRV White Book, published 19 July, stated that by "recklessly stepping up" the war in the North, the "US imperialists" are angering "all" Vietnamese people, who become more resolved to "hit hard and accurately at the enemy until final victory." In mid-July, an article by Defense Minister General Vo Nguyen Giap in the Communist Party theoretical journal, Hoc Tap, repeated this theme and added "we need to make every preparation to prepare to defeat the US aggressors in case they expand their war to the whole of our country." General Giap had also stressed this theme in an interview in Cairo earlier in the month as well as the familiar theme that the cessation of the US bombing of North Vietnam was one of the prerequisites for any negotiations to settle the Vietnamese situation. On 25 July, the Hanoi daily, Nhan Dan, carried an editorial on the occasion of the DRV's shooting down the "400th" US plane over North Vietnamese territory. In this article, Nhan Dan claimed, "We have been fighting well and at the same time carrying out our production tasks well. All

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branches of the economy are developing at an accelerated pace and are meeting the requirements of the war, and of the peoples' life."

Additional government propaganda efforts include a continuing attempt to convince the North Vietnamese populace, and the world, that US aircraft are not aiming at military targets but at civilian institutions.

The reaction of the North Vietnamese populace to the air strikes is reflected in letters of acquaintances, primarily in Thailand, and in reports of Western observers in Hanoi. Despite the possibility that these letters may be censored by government authority, the overall flavor is still one of determination to defeat the enemy. In support of this determination, they cite the heroic traditions of the Vietnamese people, the defeat of the enemy in the south, and the numerous US aircraft shot down over the DRV. Some of these letters comment on hardships they must endure, destruction of property, and disruption of their way of life.

Evaluate

2. (TS) Economic Effects: The economic effects of air strikes are largely those resulting from destroyed or damaged rail/highway bridges, damage to four electric power plants and economic disruptions caused by preparations for possible air raids. Movement of commodities between the southern and northern portions of North Vietnam has been disrupted. The bulk of the traffic was by railway, but a considerable portion of the tonnage transported between the two areas moves by coastal ships. The cost of permanent reconstruction of the rail/highway bridges would be on the order of 6.5 to 7 million dollars,

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exclusive of transportation and labor costs, for the electric power plants over 2 million dollars, and for the petroleum storage facilities about 500,000 dollars. These are considerable costs for North Vietnam, especially since the steel for bridge and petroleum tank reconstruction, and most of the equipment for the restoration of power generating capacity must be obtained from foreign sources, such as Communist China and the Soviet Union. The economic effects of the bombing have been minor in relation to total economic activity in North Vietnam. The combined effects of transportation difficulties, loss of electric power, and disruption caused by actual or anticipated air strikes have probably reduced the rate of total output of the country (GNP) by only a few percentage points. *Road*  
*on the other hand,* The country is barely self-sufficient in food, industrial output is small, and there are ambitious plans for economic expansion. *Thus* There are strains in all elements of the economy and any disruptions add to the serious problems faced by the regime. Viewed from the outside, the economic effects of the air strikes do not seem to amount to much. However, Hanoi probably has a different view. The damaged and destroyed bridges and power plants represent years of construction work which was made possible only with foreign assistance. Costs of reconstruction of the bridges, power plants, and POL storage facilities, will represent about five per cent of total annual investment. In the past the regime which has promised better things to the populace, has encountered a series of disappointments, and the

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air strikes have added to the Communist leaders' problems.

3. (TS/NFD) Effect on Military Targets: While the results of the air strikes and armed reconnaissance against North Vietnam's lines of communications are relatively easy to gauge, such is not the case with the fixed targets which were attacked during July. There is no evidence of ammunition depots being restored and only two reports of secondary explosions at targets struck. Therefore, it is considered likely that DRV ammunition stores have been effectively camouflaged and dispersed. It does not appear that an ammunition shortage exists to date, but deliveries are probably being delayed. Although damage to barrack type targets has been extensive, the loss of these facilities has probably had more of an adverse psychological impact on the troops rather than any impedance to direct military operations. The three airfields attacked during July have not been subsequently utilized although action was taken to restore the cratered runways at two airfields. Through reactivation of airfields north of Hanoi and construction of revetments of the airfields in the Hanoi/Haiphong areas, North Vietnam appears to be seeking more flexibility in dispersing their aircraft in anticipation of air strikes into the Hanoi/Haiphong areas.

4. (TS) Summary of Effects: During July, there were no indications that the US/GVN air strikes had brought the government of North Vietnam any closer to a willingness to negotiate. On the contrary, their determination to continue the conflict was manifest

This might come first  
as leader

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both in military and diplomatic actions. DRV logistic support problems in the southern part of the country have been further aggravated and their ability to support external overt aggression has been impeded. In the main, the capability of the armed forces of the DRV to execute the primary missions of defending the homeland and of training and supporting their own forces and infiltration forces for South Vietnam and Laos at present level of activity has not been altered appreciably this month. The loss of equipment, small ships, vehicles, and rolling stock will pose problems for the North Vietnamese who depend almost exclusively upon materiel aid from other Communist countries. However, additional aid, including military equipment, has been promised and there is tangible evidence of its subsequent arrival.

5. (C) The material contained in this report has been reviewed by representatives, Office Research and Reports and Office Current Intelligence, CIA who are in agreement with the overall judgments and conclusions.

*Joseph F. Carroll*

JOSEPH F. CARROLL  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
Director

1 Enclosure

Cumulative Results Air Strikes  
DRV Targets 31 Jul 65 (S/NFD)

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